



# **Tips for** Grandparents *who are* Raising Grandchildren in Illinois

These simple suggestions have been developed by the Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Illinois to assist older adult caregivers in their efforts to provide quality care for their family's children. The Task Force can be reached through the Illinois Department on Aging's toll-free Senior HelpLine, **1-800-252-8966** (Voice and TTY).

## **Starting a Support Group for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

### **Selecting a meeting site:**

Churches, schools, banks, social service agencies, hospitals, libraries, YMCA, YWCA (Keep in mind that some grandparents are reluctant to attend meetings at "social service agencies" so you may wish to hold meetings at a "neutral" facility.)

### **Consider the following when selecting a meeting site:**

- \* Is there a separate and safe area for the children to meet/play?
- \* Is the facility on a bus route?
- \* Are there kitchen facilities for meal/snack preparation or to accommodate food deliveries?
- \* Is the area private?
- \* Is the area handicapped accessible?

### **Identifying grandparents who are raising grandchildren:**

- \* Outreach efforts should attempt to identify grandparents through a number of sources.
- \* Public/private schools/school boards/PTAs
- \* Pre-schools and day-care programs
- \* Pediatricians' offices
- \* Local public health departments and clinics
- \* After school programs
- \* Community centers
- \* Church bulletins
- \* Grocery stores
- \* Banks
- \* Social service agencies
- \* Hospitals

- \* Libraries
- \* Senior centers
- \* United Way
- \* Police departments
- \* Lawyers
- \* Newspaper articles announcing the group and highlighting the issue of grandparents raising grandchildren

**Marketing the support group:**

- \* Develop a one-paragraph, easy to read summary describing your group and how it will benefit grandparents and grandchildren.
- \* Develop a flyer announcing the group/meeting date/time/location/child care/contact person/phone

Post this in grocery stores, drug stores, banks, libraries, hospitals, church bulletins, senior/community centers, doctors' offices, health clinics, social service agencies, local Dept. Of Human Services/Public Aid/DCFS offices, social service/counseling agencies, request it be sent home with school children or in school newsletters.

- \* You may want to have a "kick off" event in collaboration with an agency/hospital/library/or school on an issue relevant to grandparents raising grandchildren.

For example: An evening or lunch hour presentation by an attorney discussing guardianship/custody issues. Have support group information available and grandparents "sign in" at the session.

- \* Contact a local newspaper reporter and ask them to write an article on grandparents raising grandchildren; mention the support group.
- \* Contact local TV/radio stations regarding public service announcements and talk shows.